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Anderson et al.

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(54) **DRAWER GLIDE MECHANISM**

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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(60) Provisional application No. 61/552,128, filed on Oct. 27, 2011, provisional application No. 61/606,266, filed on Mar. 2, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A47B 88/04	(2006.01)
A47B 88/10	(2006.01)
A47B 88/16	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***A47B 88/0466*** (2013.01); ***A47B 88/0418*** (2013.01); ***A47B 88/10*** (2013.01); ***A47B 88/16*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A47B 88/04; A47B 88/0407; A47B 88/0418; A47B 88/044; A47B 88/0466; A47B 88/08; A47B 88/10

See application file for complete search history.

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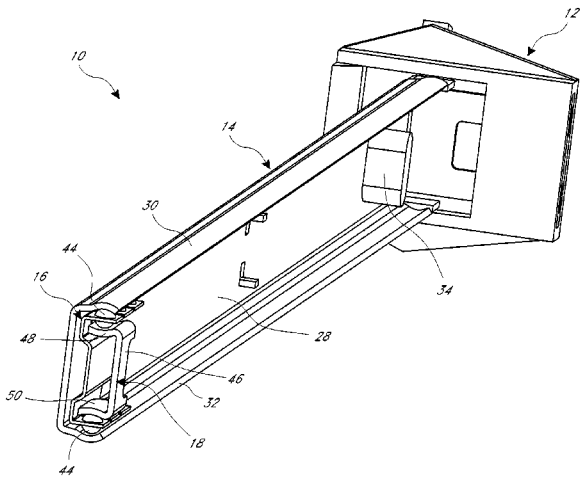
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A drawer glide mechanism can include a first elongate guide member, a second elongate glide member, a ball bearing component, and a v-notch socket. The first elongate guide member includes a distal end that is configured to fit within an opening in the v-notch socket. The drawer glide mechanism can further include one or more floating members and fixed members.

6 Claims, 22 Drawing Sheets



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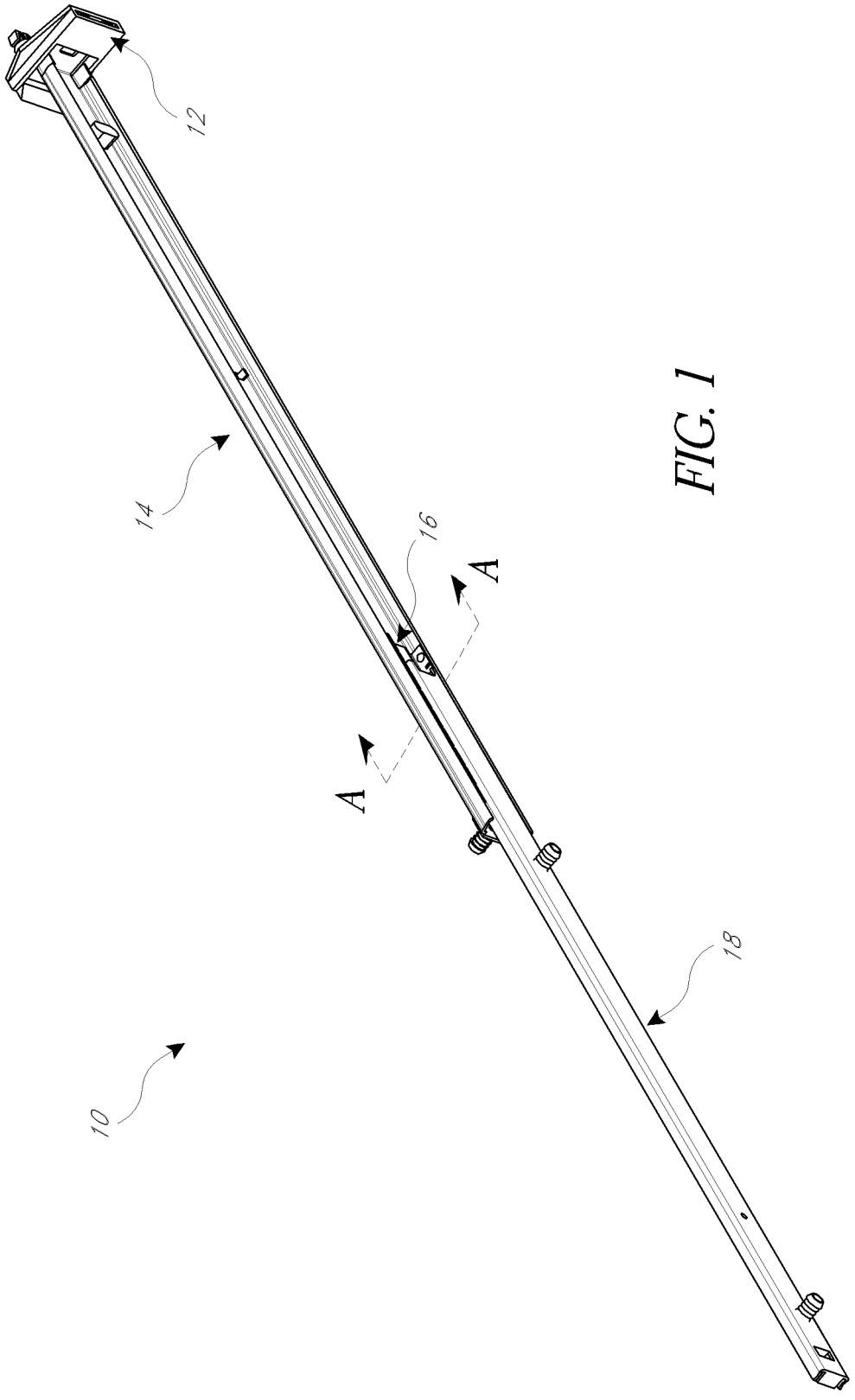

FIG. 1

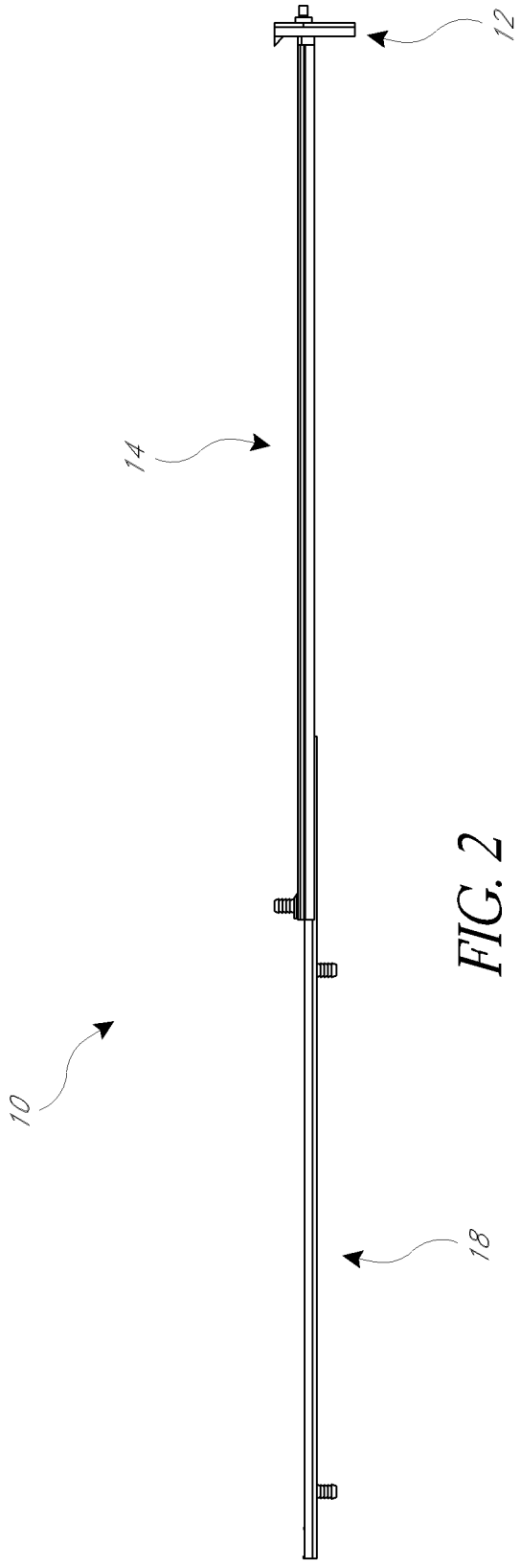

FIG. 2

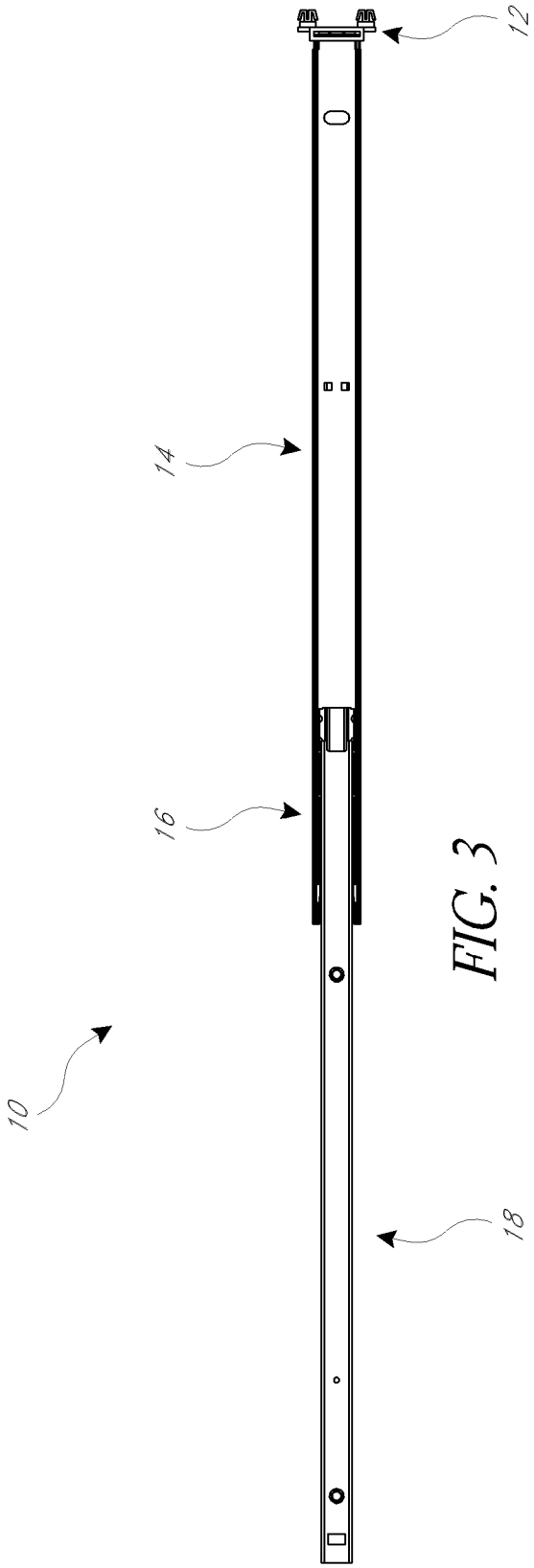

FIG. 3

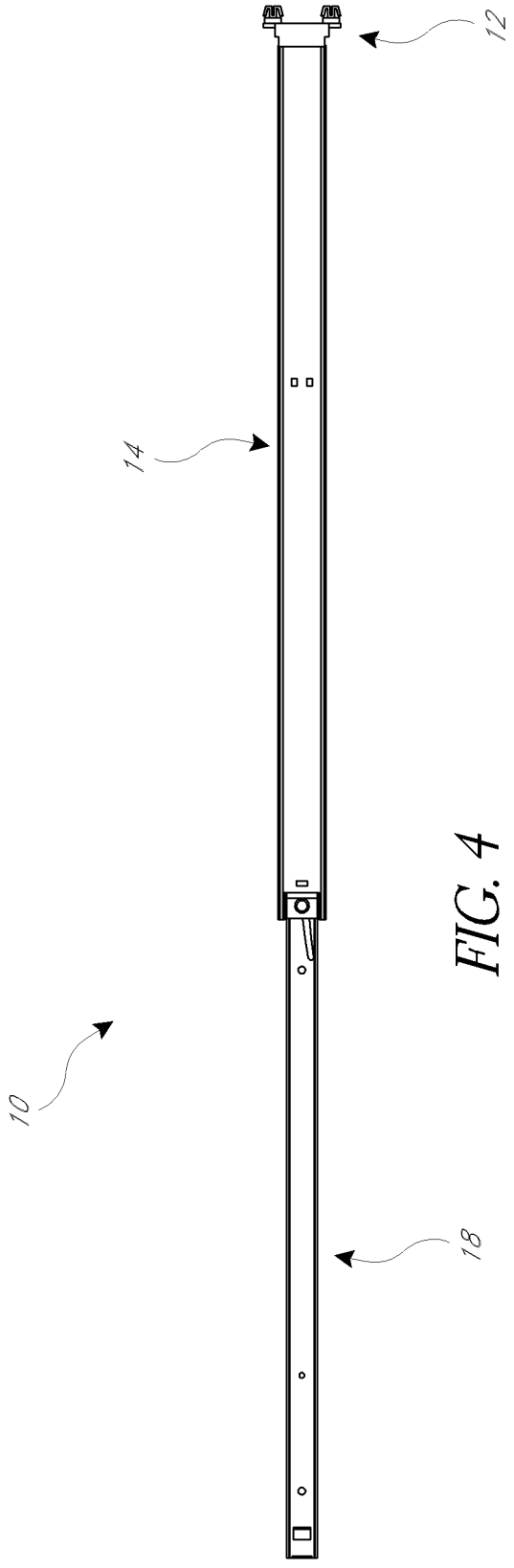

FIG. 4

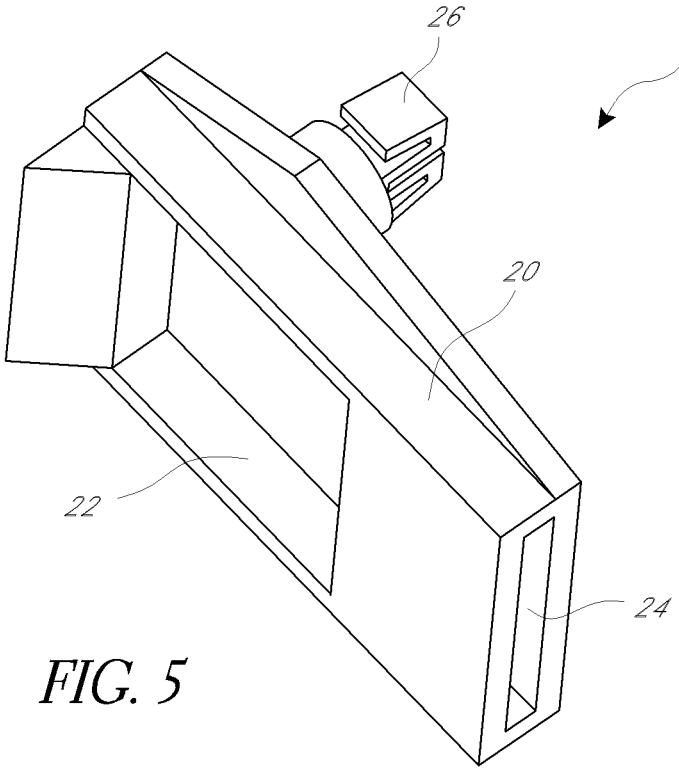

FIG. 5

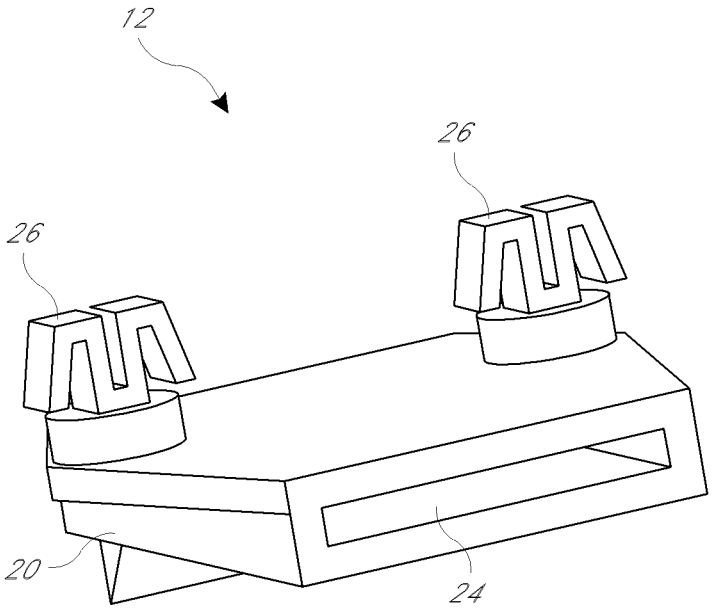

FIG. 6

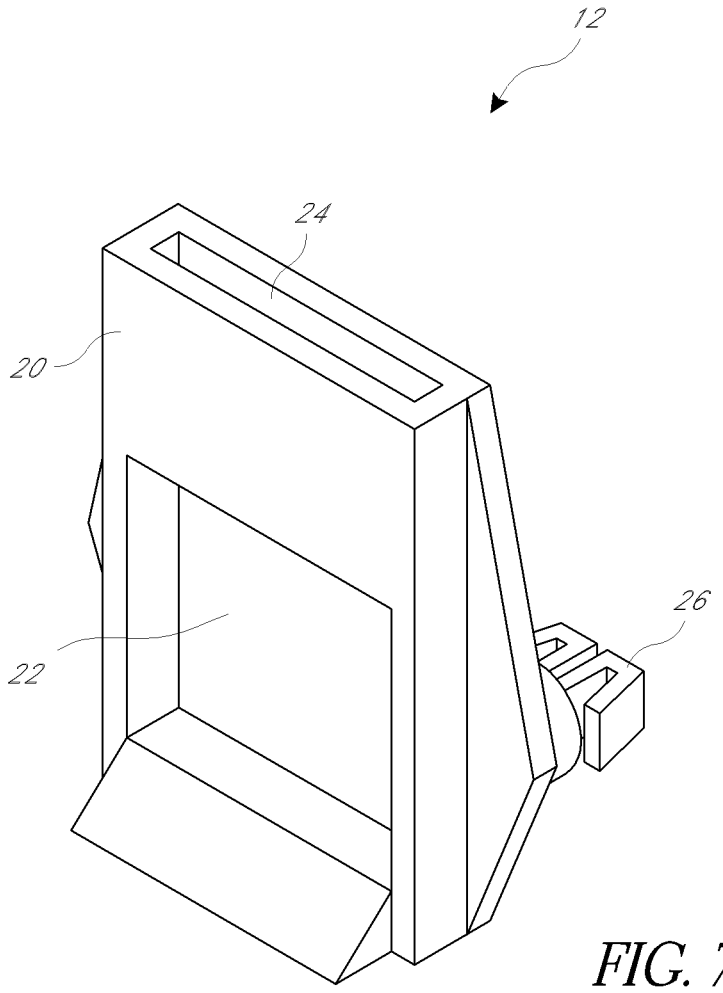

FIG. 7

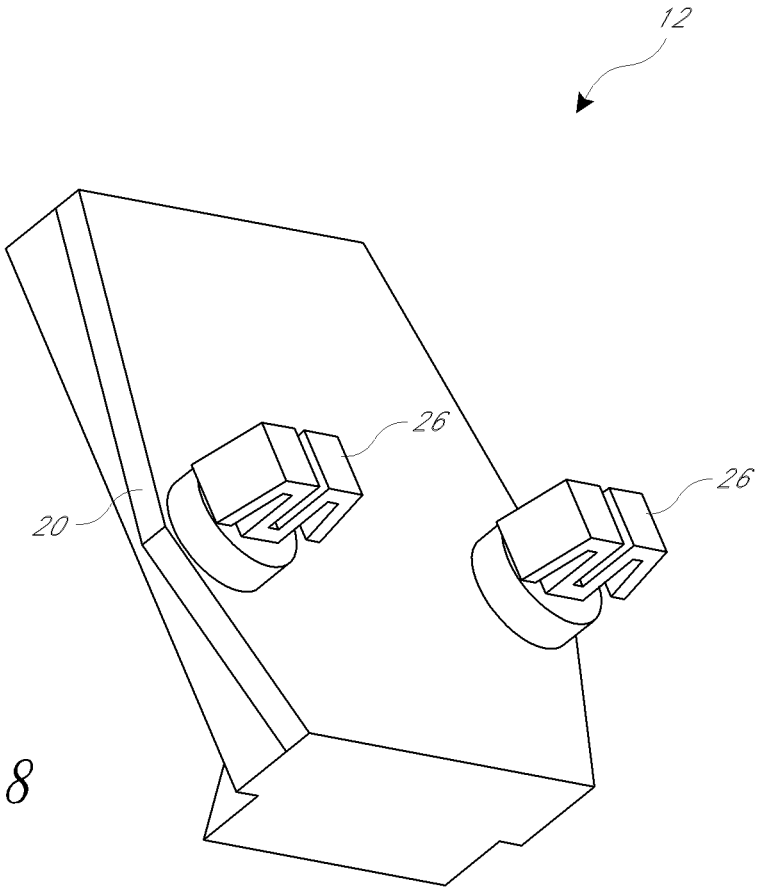

FIG. 8

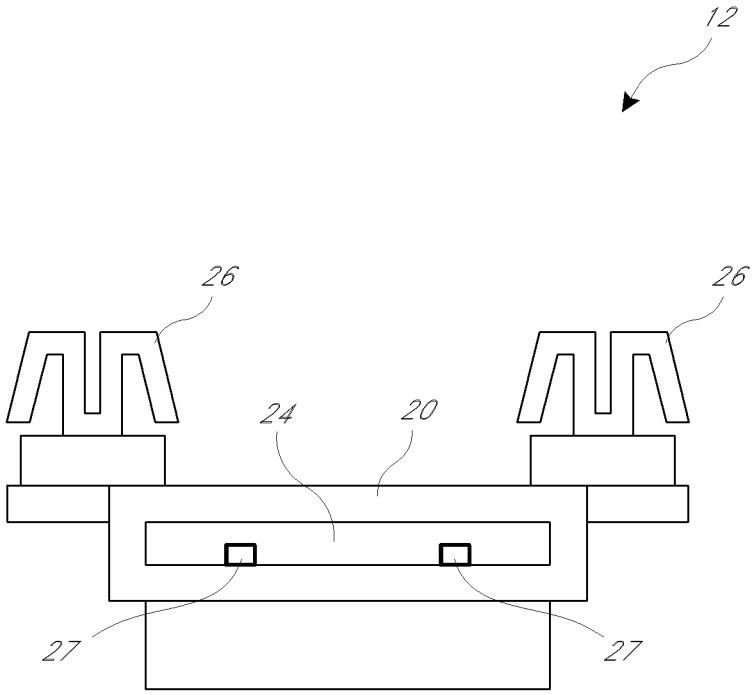

FIG. 9

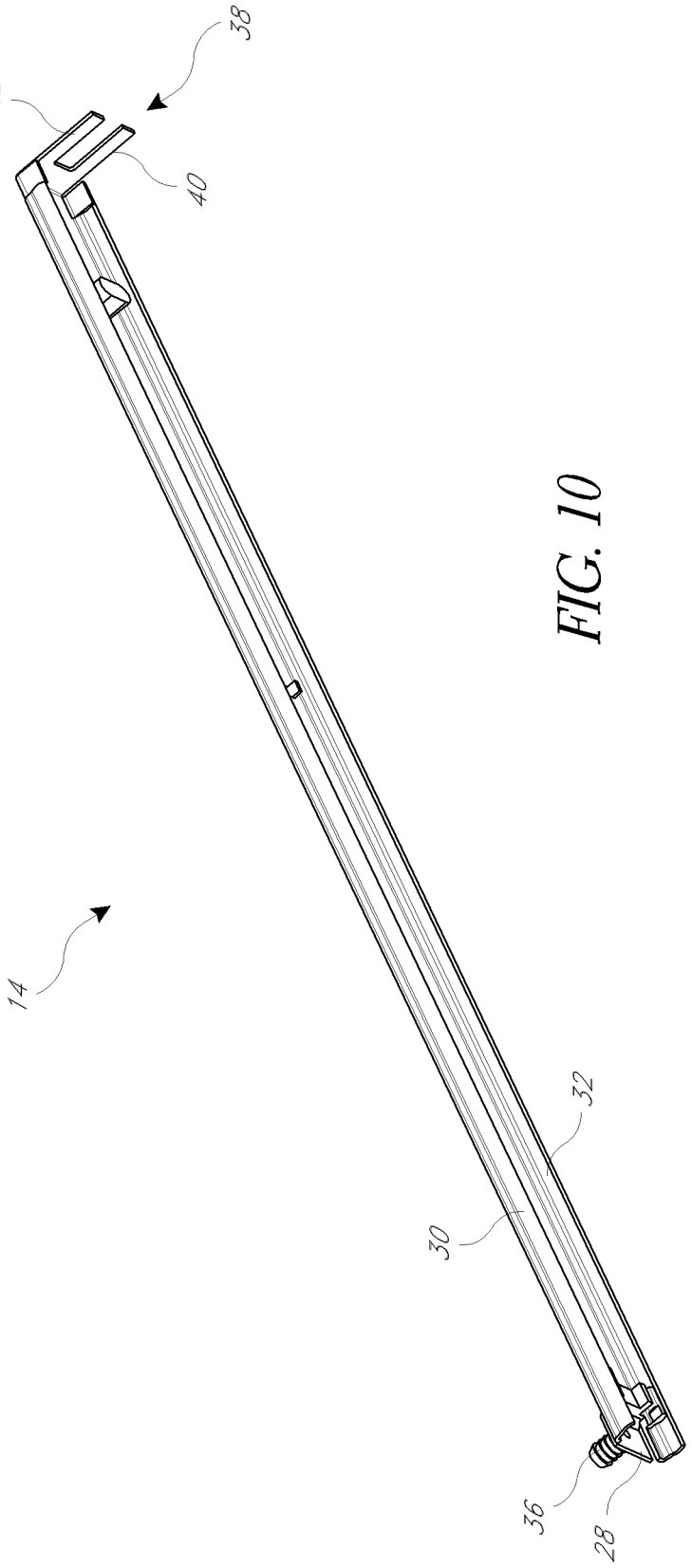

FIG. 10

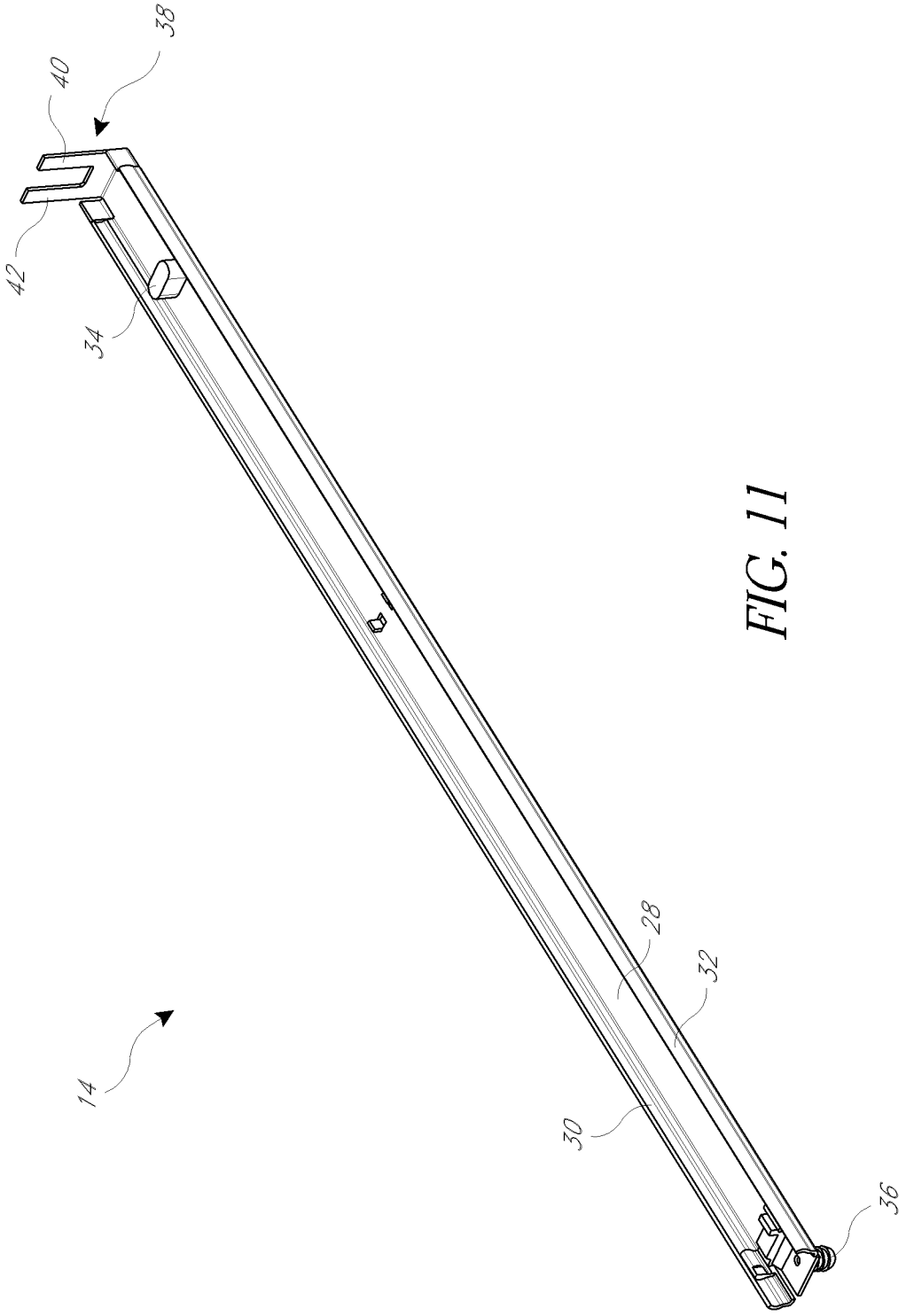

FIG. 11

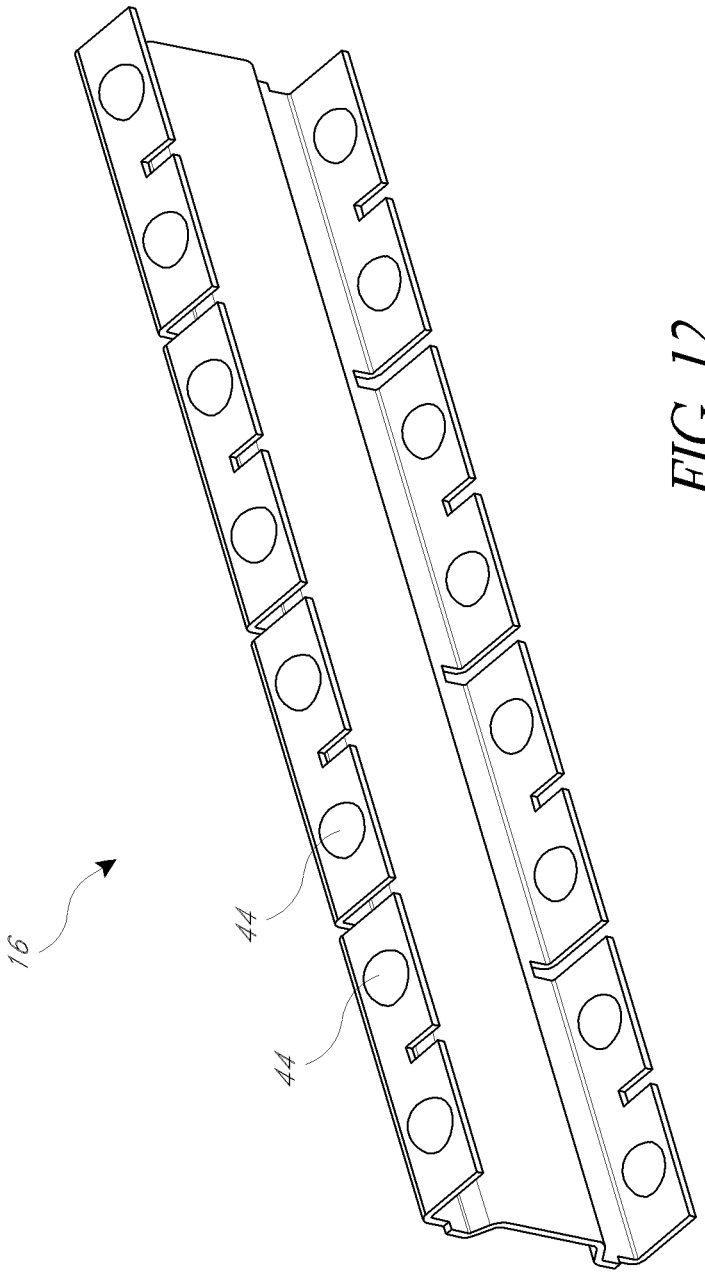

FIG. 12

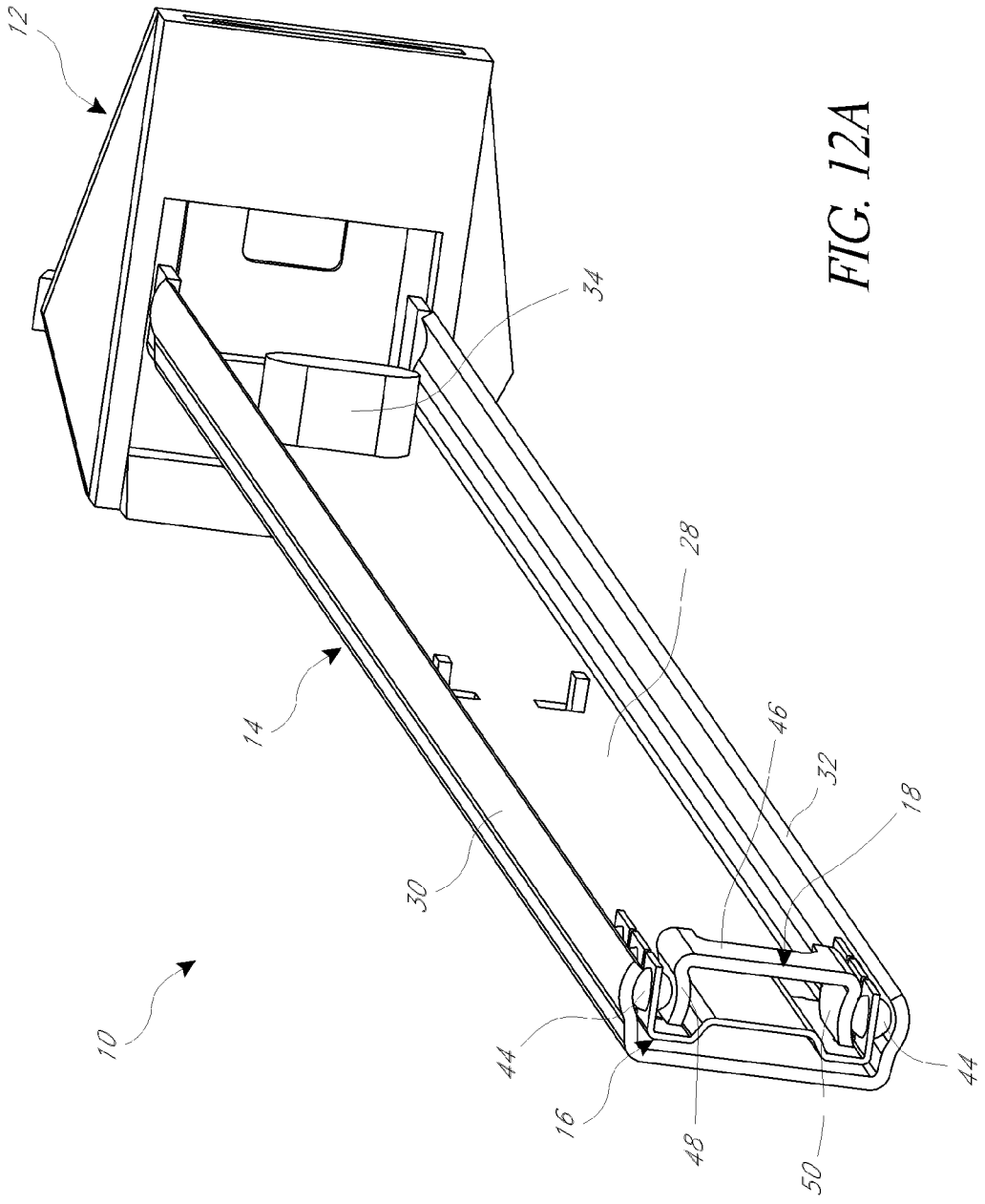

FIG. 12A

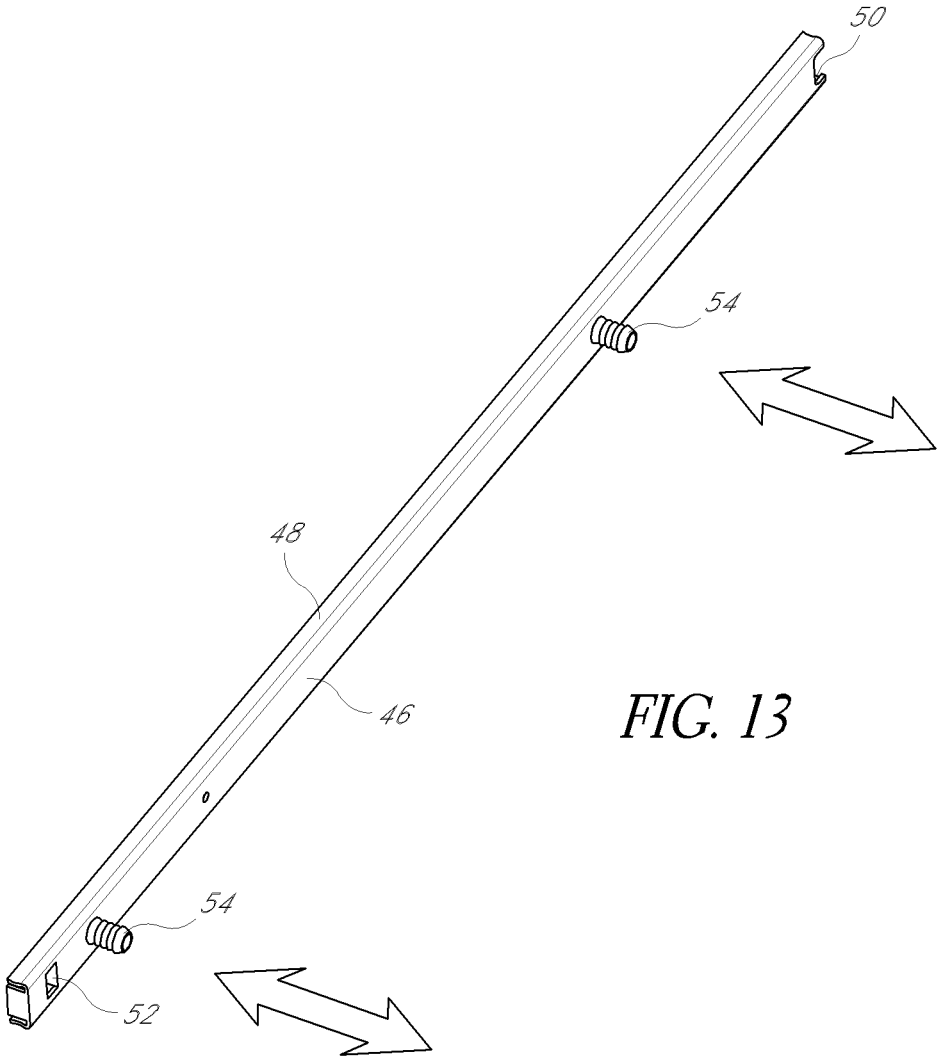

FIG. 13

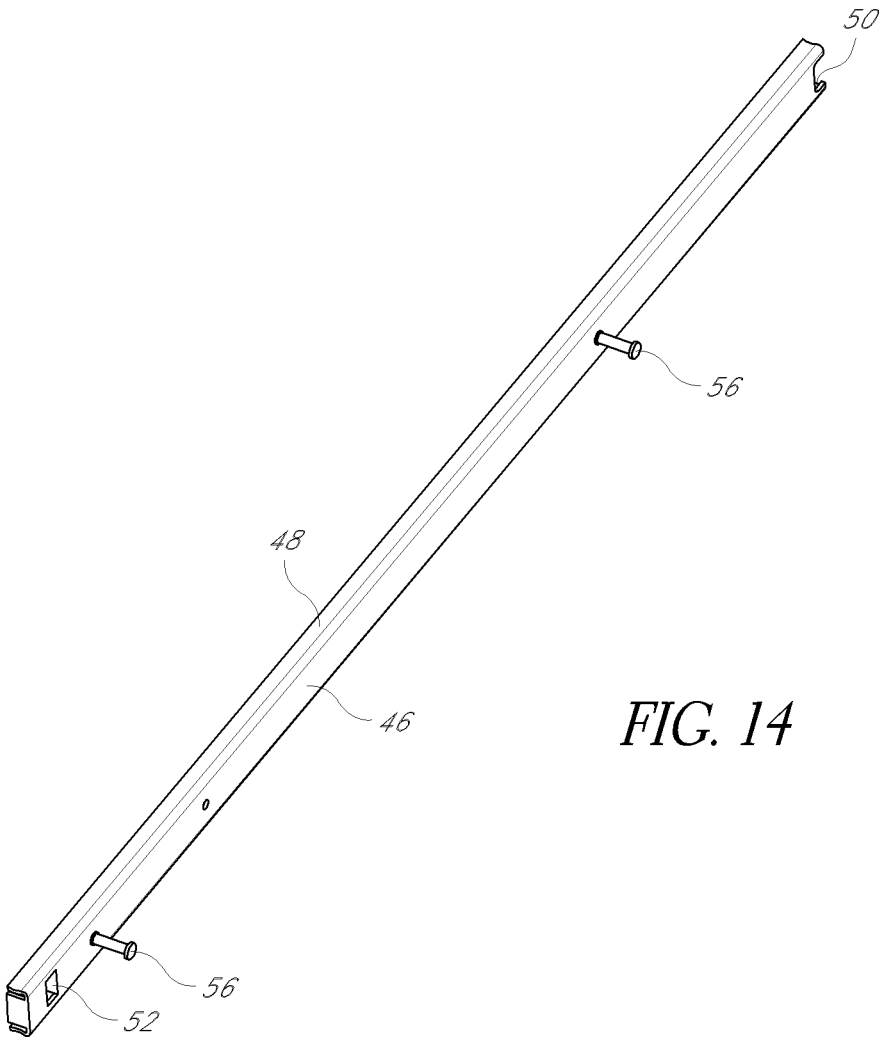

FIG. 14

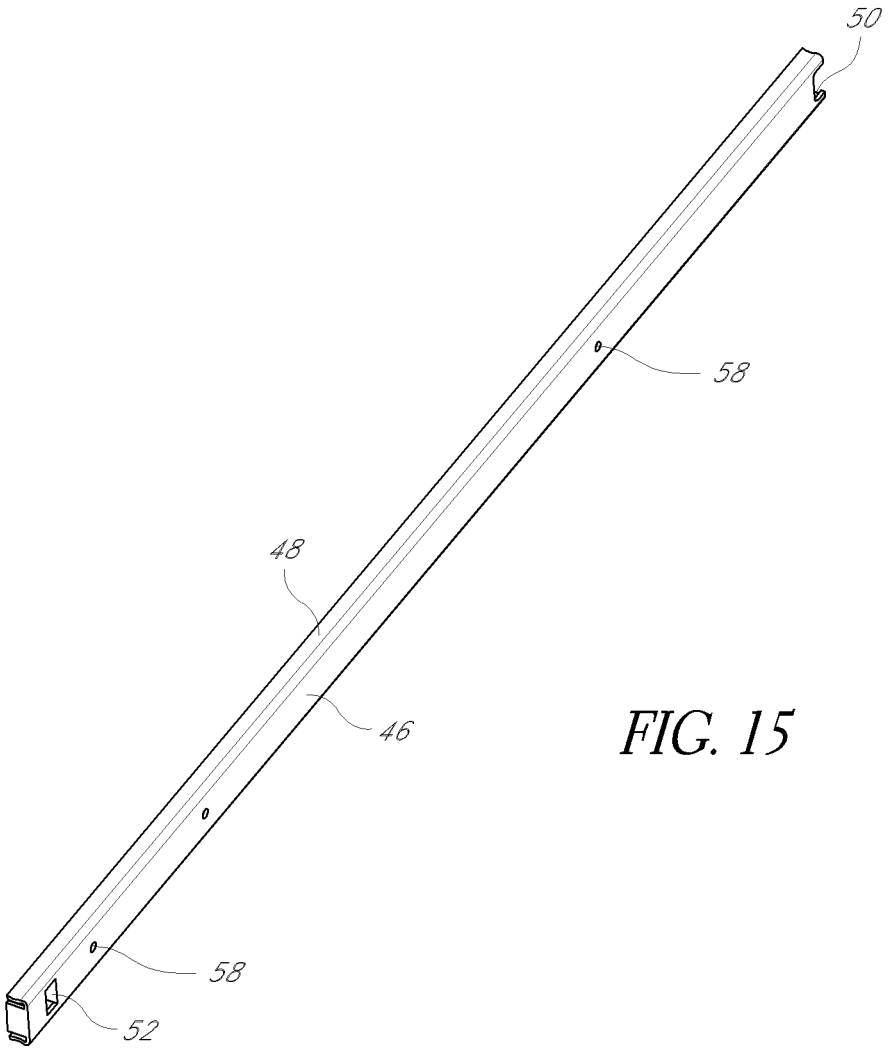

FIG. 15

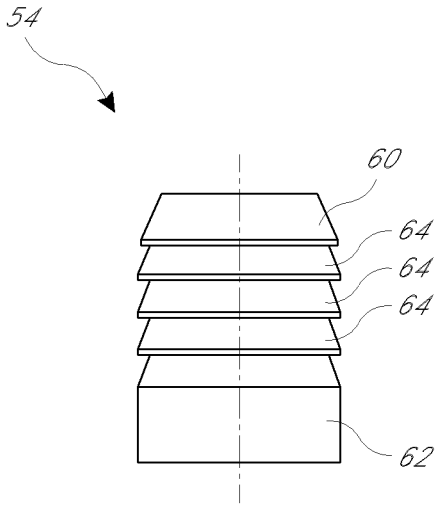

FIG. 16A

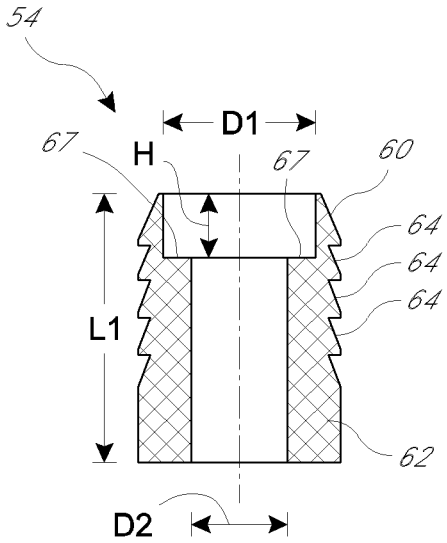

FIG. 16B

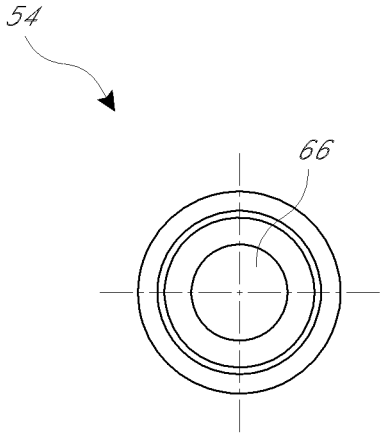

FIG. 16C

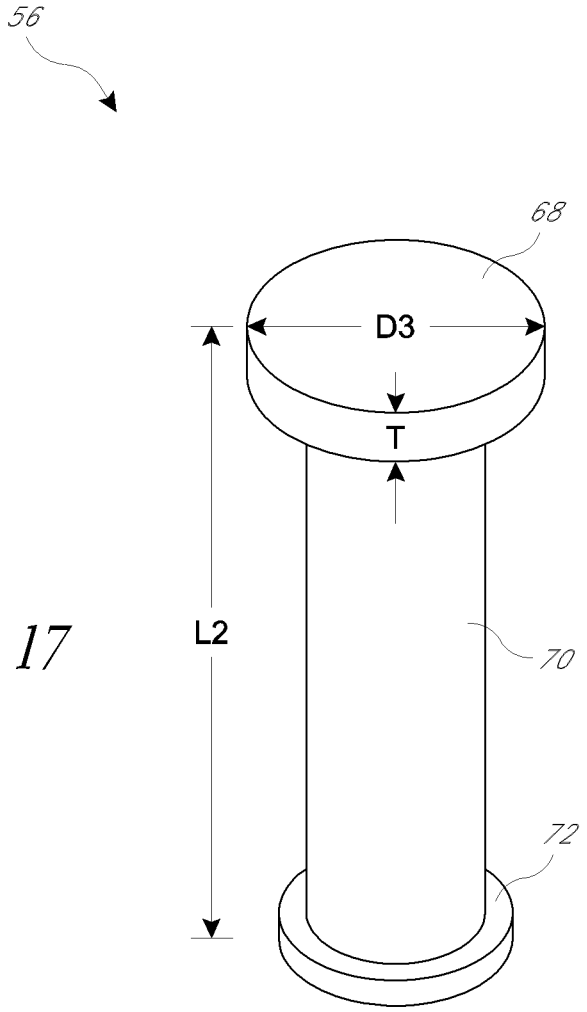

FIG. 17

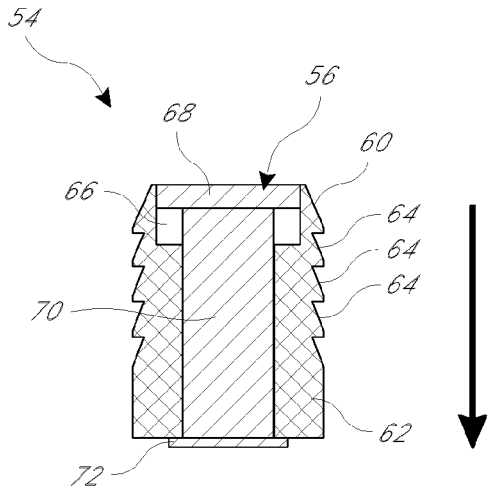

FIG. 17A

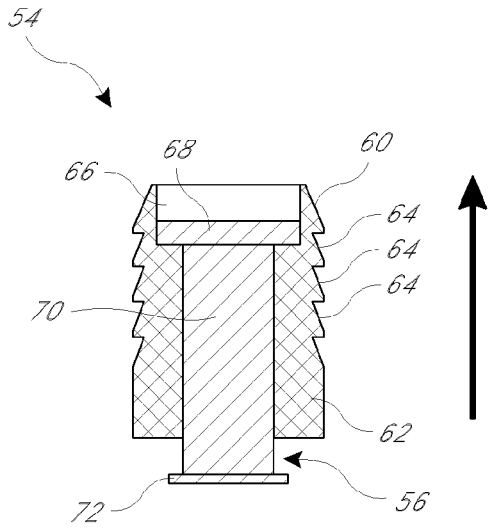

FIG. 17B

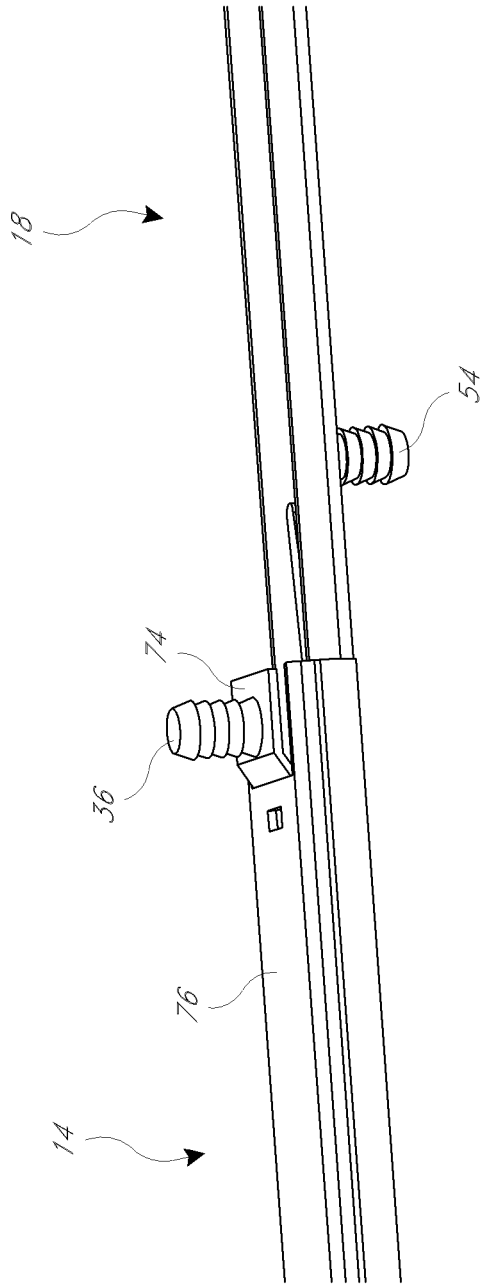

FIG. 18

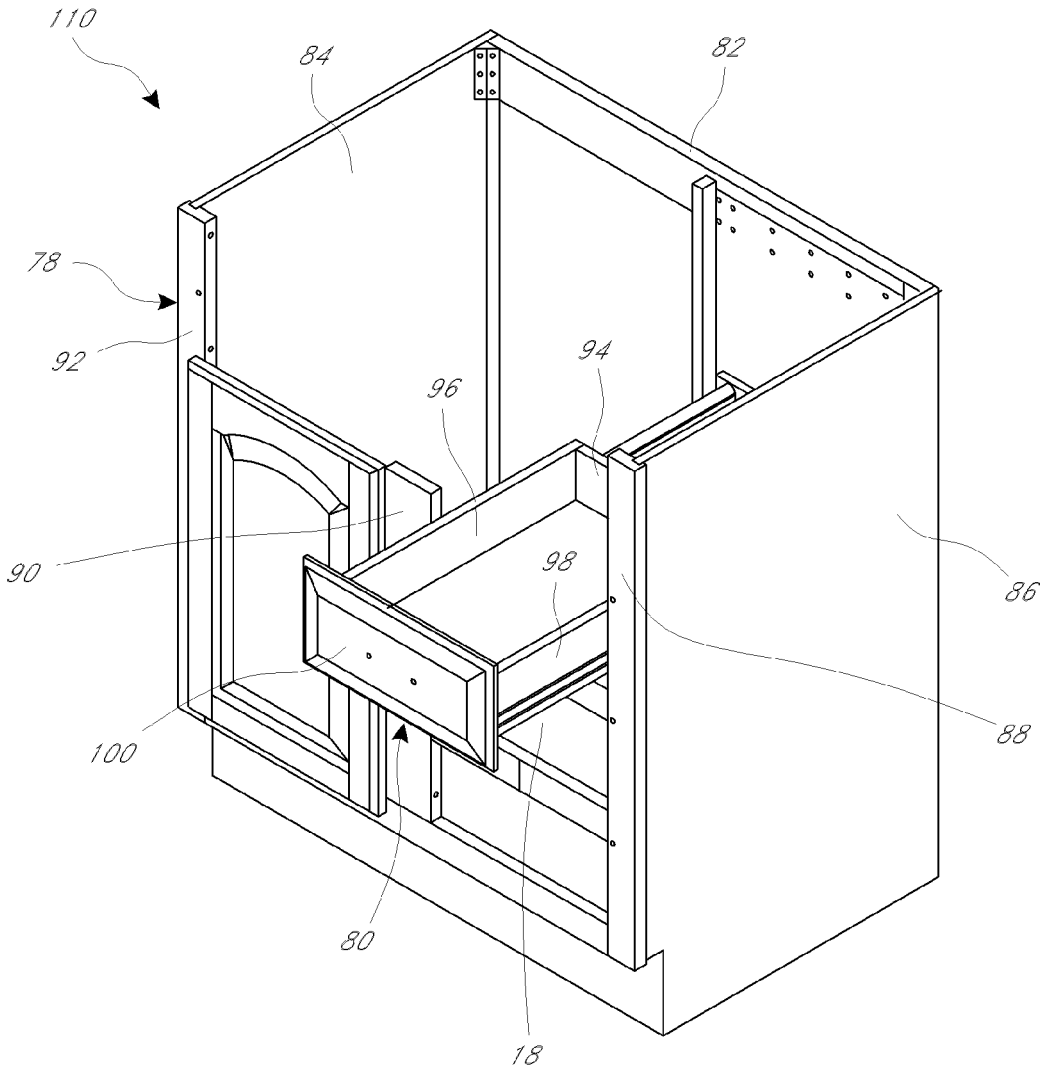

FIG. 19

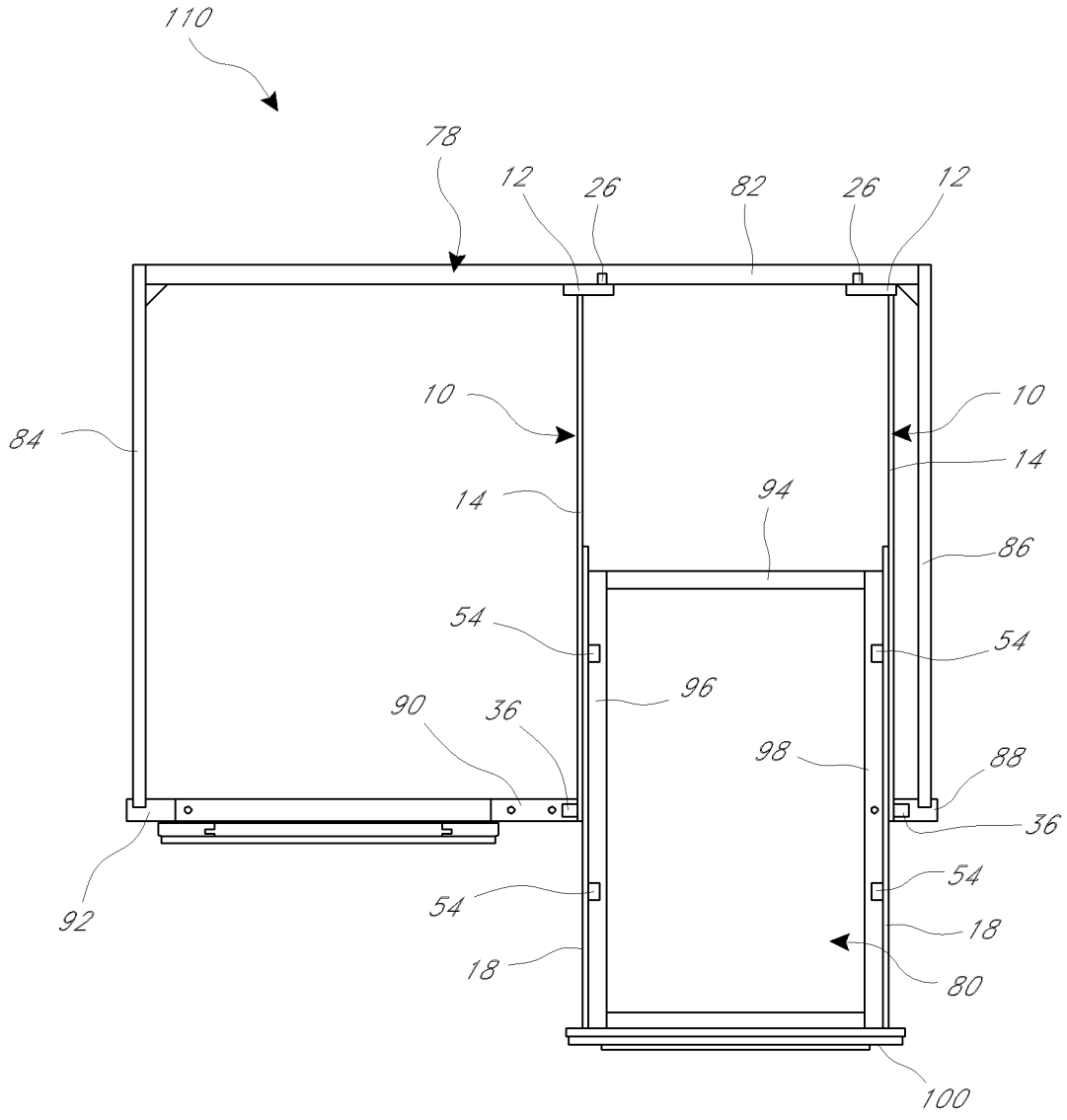
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FIG. 20

DRAWER GLIDE MECHANISM

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/445,665, titled DRAWER GLIDE MECHANISM and filed Apr. 12, 2012, which claims benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/552,128, filed Oct. 27, 2011, and to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/606,266, filed Mar. 2, 2012. Each of the foregoing application are hereby incorporated by reference herein in their entirety. Any and all priority claims identified in the Application Data Sheet, or any correction thereto, are hereby incorporated by reference under 37 CFR 1.57.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONS

1. Field of the Inventions

The present application relates generally to drawer glide mechanisms.

2. Description of the Related Art

Drawer glide mechanisms are commonly used to facilitate the opening and closing of drawers. Drawer glide mechanisms generally include a plurality of elongate guide members that slide relative to one another. The elongate guide members are often metal or plastic pieces mounted, for example, to the sides of drawers, and/or within a storage device (e.g. cabinetry).

Some common drawer glide mechanisms are referred to as epoxy glides. These types of drawer glide mechanisms are low cost, and include a single roller (e.g. wheel) on both ends of the glide mechanism. The rollers are used to allow a drawer to slide in and out of a piece of cabinetry along the guide members. The epoxy glides can be mounted to the back of a cabinetry, for example, using a single piece v-notch socket. The v-notch socket, which is generally a single plastic piece mounted to the back of a cabinetry, can receive one end of a guide member to help hold the guide member in place.

Other types of drawer glide mechanisms incorporate ball bearing guide members that allow a drawer to slide in and out in a more smooth manner. These drawer glide mechanisms often require an expensive, larger, thicker, and/or heavier two-piece socket with multiple screws or other fasteners to fasten the two-piece socket in place to the back of a storage unit. These drawer glide mechanisms are used for example in industrial settings and for high-end cabinetry where there are tight dimensional tolerances.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An aspect of at least one of the embodiments disclosed herein includes the realization that epoxy glides can often create rough, uneven drawer movement within a piece of cabinetry, due to the single rollers, loose fit of the guides, and the size/weight of a cabinet drawer.

Another aspect of at least one of the embodiments disclosed herein includes the realization that due to the high cost and labor involved with the two-piece socket and ball bearing guide, and the lack of tight tolerances often found in kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, a typical ball bearing drawer glide mechanism is not ideal for use in mass production of kitchen/bathroom cabinetry.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to have a drawer glide mechanism for kitchens/bathroom cabinetry that utilizes the advantage of ball bearing guides for smooth operation of the drawer, and also utilizes the advantage of a v-notch type socket for cost-efficiency.

Thus, in accordance with at least one embodiment described herein, a drawer glide mechanism can comprise a first elongate guide member having a distal end, a second elongate guide member nested within the first elongate guide member, a ball bearing component comprising a plurality of ball bearings between the first and second elongate guide members configured to permit movement of the second elongate guide member relative the first elongate guide member, and a v-notch socket having at least a first opening for receiving the distal end of the first elongate guide member.

Another aspect of at least one of the embodiments disclosed herein includes the realization that wood and/or other types of drawers often are warped or are otherwise misshapen and uneven. When installing a warped drawer into a cabinet, it can be difficult to properly align and install the drawer, particularly when the drawer is intended to be attached directly to one or more drawer glides.

Therefore, it would be advantageous to have a drawer glide mechanism for kitchens/bathroom cabinetry that utilizes an attachment structure that compensates for warping of drawers, and facilitates easy attachment and adjustment of the drawer within the cabinetry.

Thus, in accordance with at least one embodiment disclosed herein, a drawer glide mechanism can comprise a first elongate guide member having a distal end, a second elongate guide member nested within the first elongate guide member, the second elongate guide member having a longitudinally extending body, a fixed member protruding from and extending generally transverse to the longitudinally extending body, and a floating member extending at least partially over the fixed member, the floating member configured to slide over the first fixed member in a transverse direction relative the longitudinally extending body.

In accordance with at least another embodiment disclosed herein, a drawer system can comprise a drawer cabinet comprising a back side panel, two side panels, and a plurality of face frame components, two drawer glide mechanisms, each of the drawer glide mechanisms attached to the back side panel and comprising a first elongate guide member having a longitudinally extending body and a distal end, a second elongate guide member nested within the first elongate guide member, the second elongate guide member having a longitudinally extending body, at least one fixed member protruding from and extending generally transverse to the longitudinally extending body of the second elongate guide member, at least one floating member extending at least partially over the fixed member, the floating member configured to slide over the first fixed member in a transverse direction relative the longitudinally extending body of the second elongate guide member, a ball bearing component comprising a plurality of ball bearings between the first and second elongate guide members configured to permit longitudinal movement of the second elongate guide member relative to the first elongate guide member, a socket having a body portion, at least a first opening in the body portion, and at least one dowel portion protruding from a back side of the body portion and into the back side panel of the drawer cabinet, the socket configured to receive the distal end of the first elongate guide member, and a drawer comprising a back drawer panel, two side drawer panels, and a front drawer panel, the drawer attached to the second elongate guide member via the at least one floating member.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and advantages of the present embodiments will become more apparent upon reading the

following detailed description and with reference to the accompanying drawings of the embodiments, in which:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of an embodiment of a drawer glide mechanism;

FIG. **2** is a left side elevational view of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a bottom plan view of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **4** is a top plan view of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**;

FIGS. **5-9** are views of a v-notch socket of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **8**;

FIGS. **10** and **11** are perspective view of a first elongate guide member of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **12** is a perspective view of a ball bearing component of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **12**A is a perspective view of the cross-section taken along line A-A in FIG. **1**;

FIG. **13** is a perspective view of a second elongate guide member of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**, illustrating a plurality of fixed and floating members attached thereto;

FIG. **14** is a perspective view of the second elongate guide member of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**, illustrating removal of the floating members, with the fixed members remaining;

FIG. **15** is a perspective view of the second elongate guide member of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**, illustrating removal of both the fixed and floating members;

FIG. **16**A is a front view of one of the floating members;

FIG. **16**B is a cross-sectional view of the floating member of FIG. **16**A;

FIG. **16**C is a bottom plan view of the floating member of FIG. **16**A;

FIG. **17** is a perspective view of one of the fixed members;

FIGS. **17**A and **17**B are cross-sectional views illustrating two different positions of one of the fixed and floating members;

FIG. **18** is a partial perspective view of the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**, illustrating an embossed portion on a distal end of the first elongate guide member;

FIG. **19** is a top plan view of an embodiment of a drawer cabinet system including the drawer glide mechanism of FIG. **1**; and

FIG. **20** is a perspective view of the drawer cabinet system of FIG. **19**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

With reference to FIGS. **1-4**, a drawer glide mechanism **10** can comprise a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, and a second elongate guide member **18**. The first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate member **18** can comprise elongate pieces of metal, plastic, or other suitable material. The first elongate guide member **14** can be coupled (e.g. releasably coupled) to the v-notch socket **12**, and/or can also be coupled to the second elongate guide member **18**. For example, the second elongate guide member **18** can be nested within the first elongate guide member **14**. The ball bearing component **16** can be nested between the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18**. The second elongate guide member **18** can be free to move (e.g. glide) relative to the first elongate guide member **14** in at least one direction via the ball bearing component **16**. For example, the second elongate guide member **18** can glide alongside a length the first elongate guide member **14**, generally parallel to the first elongate guide member **14**. Other arrangements of the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18** are also possible. For example, in some embodiments the first elongate guide member **14** can be nested within the second elongate guide member **18**. In some embodiments one or more of the elongate guide members **14**, **18** can be telescopingly engaged with one another. In some embodiments more than two elongate guide members can be used. In some embodiments more than one ball bearing component **16** can be used.

With reference to FIGS. **5-9**, the v-notch socket **12** can comprise a body portion **20**, a first opening **22**, a second opening **24**, and at least one protruding v-notch dowel portion **26**. The body portion **20** can be comprised of plastic, or other suitable material. The first opening **22** can, for example, be cut out of, or molded as part of, the body **20**. The first opening **22** can be located on a front-facing portion of the v-notch socket **12**. The first opening **22** can be large enough to receive a distal end of the first elongate guide member **14**. The second opening **24** can, for example, be cut out of or molded as part of, the body **20**. The second opening **24** can be located on a side-facing portion of the v-notch socket **12**. The second opening **24** can be large enough to receive at least a portion of the distal end of the first elongate guide member **14**. In some embodiments, the first and second openings **22**, **24** can be continuous, and linked together, such that they form one opening and pathway through the body of the v-notch socket **12**.

With continued reference to FIGS. **5-9**, the at least one v-notch dowel portion **26** can comprise, for example, a plastic dowel piece that is integrally formed with (e.g. molded with) the body portion **20**. The v-notch dowel portion **26** can extend from a back-facing portion of the v-notch socket **12**. The v-notch dowel portion **26** can extend from the body **20** on an opposite side of the body **20** as the first opening **22**. In some embodiments, the v-notch socket **12** can have two v-notch dowel portions **26**, though other numbers are also possible. The v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into the back side paneling of a drawer cabinet. Specifically, the v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into a relatively thin back side drawer panel. For example, in some embodiments, the v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into a thin back side drawer panel that is no greater than 5 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into a back side drawer panel that is no greater than 4 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into a back side drawer panel that is no greater than 3 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the v-notch dowel portions **26** can be configured to be inserted into a back side drawer panel that is no greater than 2 mm in thickness. Other ranges and values are also possible. Thus, at least in some embodiments, plastic v-notch dowel portions **26** and a plastic v-notch socket **12** can facilitate holding an attached metal first elongate guide member **14**, metal ball bearing component **16**, and metal second elongate guide member **18** in place within a drawer cabinet, even if the drawer cabinet has relatively thin paneling. With reference to FIG. **9**, in some embodiments the v-notch socket **12** can include one or more tabs **27**. The tabs **27** can be used to help guide a distal end of the first elongate guide member **14**. The tabs **27** can be used to help generally hold (e.g. frictionally) a distal end of the first elongate guide member **14** in place and inhibit or prevent movement of the distal end of the first elongate guide member **14** relative the v-notch socket **12** in at least one direction.

With reference to FIGS. **10** and **11**, the first elongate guide member **14** can comprise a web portion **28**, a first flange portion **30** extending from the web portion **28**, and a second flange portion **32** extending from the web portion **28**. The web portion **28**, first flange portion **30**, and second flange portion **32** can form a generally U-shaped profile. Other configurations and shapes for the first elongate guide member **14** are also possible. The first elongate guide member **14** can also comprise a stop member **34**. The stop member **34** can comprise a piece of plastic, rubber, or other material, configured to limit relative motion between the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18**. The stop member **34** can be located generally at a distal end of the first elongate guide member **14**, though other locations are also possible.

With continued reference to FIGS. **10** and **11**, the first elongate guide member **14** can further comprise a sidewall attachment mechanism **36**. The sidewall attachment mechanism **36** can comprise, for example, a plastic dowel that is rigidly affixed to one side of the first elongate guide member **14**. The sidewall attachment mechanism **36** can be used, for example, to attach the first elongate guide member **14** to a face frame component or the inside side paneling of a drawer cabinet. Thus, in some embodiments, both the v-notch dowel portions **26** described above, as well as the sidewall attachment mechanism **36**, can be used to help attach and/or generally fix the position and/or orientation of the first elongate guide mechanism **36** within a drawer cabinet.

With continued reference to FIGS. **10** and **11**, the first elongate guide member **14** can comprise a distal end **38** that is bent relative to the generally longitudinally extending remaining portion of the first elongate guide member **14**. For example, the distal end **38** can be bent at a generally 90 degree angle relative to the rest of the elongate guide member **14**. The distal end **38** can be bent, for example, inwardly such that it will extend directly behind a drawer when the drawer is attached to the elongate guide members **14**, **18**. In some embodiments the distal end **38** can have a generally fork-shaped configuration, such that the distal end has both a first forked member **40** and a second forked member **42**. In some embodiments the forked-shaped configuration can facilitate attachment of the distal end **38** into the first opening **22** of the v-notch socket **12** described above.

With reference to FIG. **12**, and as described above, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can comprise a ball bearing component **16** (e.g. what is commonly referred to as a race). The ball bearing component **16** can comprise a plurality of ball bearing rollers **44**. The ball bearing rollers **44** can be spaced apart from one another and located along opposing sides of the ball bearing component **16**. The ball bearing component **16** can be nested between the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18** so as to facilitate a smooth gliding motion between the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18**.

With reference to FIGS. **12**A-**15**, the second elongate guide member **18** can comprise a web portion **46**, a first flange portion **48** extending from web portion **46**, and a second flange portion **50** extending from web portion **46**. The web portion **46**, first flange portion **48**, and second flange portion **50** can form a generally U-shaped profile. Other configurations and shapes for the second elongate guide member **18** are also possible.

As illustrated in FIG. **12**A, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can optimally and advantageously include components that are nested and captured within one another, so as to severely restrict or entirely prohibit relative movement of components. For example, as illustrated in FIG. **12**A, the first elongate guide member **14** can include the web portion **28** and first and second flange portions **30**, **32**. In some embodiments the first flange portion **30** can be shaped so as to curve over one set of the ball bearings **44** along the ball bearing component **16**. Similarly, the second flange portion **32** can be shaped so as to curve over the other, opposite set of ball bearings **44** along the ball bearing component **16**. Additionally, the second elongate guide member **18** can include the web portion **46** and first and second flange portions **48**, **50**. In some embodiments the first flange portion **48** can be shaped so as to curve over one set of ball bearings **44** along the ball bearing component **16**. Similarly, the second flange portion **50** can be shaped so as to curve over the other, opposite set of ball bearings **44** along the ball bearing component **16**. This curvature of the first flange portions **30**, **48**, and the second flange portions **32**, **50** effectively captures the second elongate guide member **18** within the ball bearing component **16**, and captures the ball bearing component **16** within the first elongate guide member **14**. The overall capturing of these components severely restricts or entirely prohibits the second elongate guide member **18** from moving away from the first elongate guide member **14** in any direction other than along a path parallel to the second elongate guide member provided by the ball bearing component **16**. Thus, the only relative movement of the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18** that is allowed is the relative sliding of the guide members **14**, **18** along parallel paths. This arrangement advantageously provides for smooth operation.

With reference to FIGS. **13**-**15**, the second elongate guide member **18** can also comprise at least one slot **52**. The slot **52** can be located, for example, along a distal end of the second elongate guide member **18**. The slot **52** can be used to allow for adjustability of an attached drawer. For example, the vertical slot **52** can allow for vertical adjustment of a drawer that is attached to the second elongate guide member **18**. In some embodiments a fastener or other device can be inserted through the slot **52**. Because of the size and shape of the slot **52**, the fastener or other device can slide vertically up and down within the slot **52**, thus allowing relative movement of the drawer to the second elongate guide member **18**.

With reference to FIGS. **13**-**17**, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can also comprise one or more structures that are adjustable to compensate for variations in drawer size, shape, and/or warping. For example, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can comprise at least one floating member **54**, and at least one fixed member **56**. The floating member **54** can be configured to attach directly to the side of a drawer, as well as to be attached, in a floating manner, to the fixed member **56**. The fixed member **56** can be rigidly attached to, or integrally formed with, one or more of the first elongate guide member **14** and second elongate guide member **18**. For example, a plurality of floating members **54** can comprise plastic dowels, and a plurality of fixed members **56** can comprise metal pins. The fixed members **56** can be attached to (e.g. welded to) locations **58** along the second elongate guide member **18**, as seen in FIG. **15**. The fixed members **56** can be spaced apart longitudinally along a length of the second elongate guide member **18**. In some embodiments, more than two fixed members **56** can be used.

With reference to FIGS. **16**A-C, in some embodiments the floating member **54** can comprise a first end **60**, a second end **62**, and a plurality of ridges **64** between the first end **60** and second end **62**. The ridges **64** can be used to facilitate attachment of the floating member **54** to the side paneling of a drawer. The floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into the side paneling of a drawer. Specifically, the floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into a relatively thin side panel of a drawer. For example, in some

embodiments, the floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into a thin side paneling of a drawer that is no greater than 5 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into the side paneling of a drawer that is no greater than 4 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into the side paneling of a drawer that is no greater than 3 mm in thickness. In some embodiments the floating members **54** can be configured to be inserted into the side paneling of a drawer that is no greater than 2 mm in thickness. Other ranges and values are also possible.

In some embodiments the floating member **54** can have an overall length "L1" of no greater than 12 mm. In some embodiments the floating member **54** can have an overall length "L1" of no greater than 10 mm. In some embodiments the floating member **54** can have an overall length "L1" of no greater than 8 mm. Other ranges and values are also possible.

With reference to FIGS. **16**B, **17**A, and **17**B, the floating member **54** can include at least one opening **66**. In some embodiments the opening **66** can extend entirely through the floating member **54**. For example, the opening **66** can extend from the first end **60** through to the second end **62**. The opening **66** can be shaped and/or sized to accommodate one of the fixed members **56**. For example, and as illustrated in FIG. **16**B, the opening **66** can have a first diameter D1 near the first end **60** and a second, smaller diameter D2 near the second end **62**. The two diameters D1, D2 can form ledges **67** within the floating member **54**. The opening **66** can also have a length "H" where the opening **66** includes the first diameter D1.

As illustrated in FIG. **17**, the fixed member **56** can comprise a first portion **68**, a second portion **70**, and a third portion **72**. In some embodiments the fixed member **56** can have an overall length "L2" of no greater than 12 mm. In some embodiments the fixed member **56** can have an overall length "L2" of no greater than 10 mm. In some embodiments the fixed member **56** can have an overall length "L2" of no greater than 8 mm. Other ranges and values are also possible. In some embodiments the third portion **72** can be attached (e.g. via welding) to the locations **58** shown in FIG. **15**. In some embodiments the first portion **68** can have a diameter D3. The diameter D3 can be larger than that of D2, but no greater than that of D1. The first portion **68** can also comprise a length "T". In some embodiments the length "T" can be smaller than the length "H."

With reference to FIGS. **16**B, **17**, **17**A, and **17**B, when the fixed member **56** is positioned within the floating member **54**, the first portion **68** can sit within the portion of the opening **66** having the length "H." Because the diameter D3 of the first portion **68** of fixed member **56** is larger than the diameter D2 of the opening **66**, the ledges **67** can work to prevent the floating member **54** from moving relative to the fixed member **56** past a fixed point. Thus, the floating member **54** can be limited in its movement in at least one direction (e.g. away from the second elongate guide member **18**) due to the ledges **67**. The floating member **54** can also be limited in its movement in a second direction (e.g. towards the second elongate guide member **18**) by the floating member **54** contacting the first elongate guide member **14**. The arrows in FIG. **13** illustrate available directions of movement of the floating members **54**.

With reference to FIGS. **16**B, **17**, **17**A, and **17**B, because the length "H" of the opening **66** in the floating member **54** is larger than the length "T" of the first portion **68** of the fixed member **56**, it is possible for the floating member **54** to slide relative to the fixed member **56** without the first portion **68** of the fixed member **56** ever extending out of the floating member **54**. In some embodiments, for example, the ratio of the length "H" to the length "T" can be between approximately 1.0 and 1.5. In some embodiments the ratio of the length "H" to the length "T" can be between approximately 1.0 and 2.0. In some embodiments the ratio of the length "H" to the length "T" can be between approximately 1.0 and 3.0. Other values and ranges are also possible.

As illustrated by the arrows in FIGS. **13**, **17**A, and **17**B, the movement of the floating member **54** can be generally transverse to the second elongate member **18**. This movement permits adjustability and compensation for drawer warping along the side of the drawer. For example, and as described above, often times a drawer will be slightly warped and/or otherwise misshaped. When installing the drawer, the floating members **54** can be inserted into the side paneling of the drawer. Because one end of the drawer may be sticking out farther than another due to warping, the floating members **54** may end up moving out to different lengths along the arrow directions in FIG. **13**. This allows the drawer to easily be attached to the second elongate guide member **18**. Additionally, the use of floating members **54** and fixed members **56** allows for self-correction and self-adjustment of the drawer and drawer glide mechanism **10**. Thus, the floating members **54** do not require additional mechanical adjustments once the drawer is installed. Rather, the very nature of the floating members **54** described above permits automatic self-adjustment, since the floating member **54** will slide over the fixed members **56** as needed to compensate for any warping in the drawer.

With reference to FIG. **18**, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can also comprise at least one embossed portion **74** for spacing purposes when installing the drawer glide mechanism **10** within a drawer cabinet. For example, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can comprise an embossed portion **74** located generally at a distal end of the first elongate guide member **14**. The embossed portion **74** can comprise a raised piece of metal along the first elongate guide member **14**. The embossed portion **74** can act as a spacer within the interior of a drawer cabinet. For example, the embossed portion **74** can create a spacing between the first elongate guide member **14** and a face frame component or an inside side paneling of a drawer cabinet. This spacing can facilitate installation of the drawer glide mechanism **10**, and help to prevent unwanted friction or contact between various components of the drawer glide mechanism **10**, drawer, and/or drawer cabinet.

With reference to FIGS. **19** and **20**, an embodiment of a drawer system **110** can include two drawer glide mechanisms **10**, a drawer cabinet **78**, and a drawer **80**. The drawer cabinet **78** can include a back side panel **82** and at least two sidewall panels **84**, **86**. The two drawer glide mechanisms **10** can be attached to the back side panel **82**. For example, and as described above, the drawer glide mechanisms **10** can include dowel portions **26** that are configured to extend into the back side panel **82**. The dowel portions **26** can hold the v-notch sockets **12** in place. In embodiments where the drawer cabinet **110** is a face frame cabinet, the drawer cabinet **78** can also include one or more face frame components. For example, and as illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20**, the drawer cabinet **78** can include face frame components **88**, **90**, and **92**. The face frame components **88**, **90**, **92** can provide a framework within which one or more drawers or cabinet doors can be fitted. Additionally, the face frame components **88** and **90** can be used to anchor the first elongate guide member **14**. For example, and with reference to FIGS. **18** and **20**, the sidewall attachment mechanisms **36** described above can be inserted into the face frame components **88** and **90**. The sidewall

attachment mechanisms **36** can be inserted such that the face frame components **88** and **90** are generally flush with the embossed portion **74** of the first elongate guide member **14**.

With continued reference to FIGS. **19** and **20**, the drawer **80** can include a back drawer panel **94**, two side drawer panels **96**, **98**, and a front drawer panel **100**. The drawer glide mechanisms **10** can be attached to the drawer **80** via the floating members **54** and fixed members **56** described above. For example, and with reference to FIG. **20**, the floating members **54** can be inserted into the side drawer panels **96**, **98**. The floating members **54** and fixed members **56** can accommodate for any warped portions of the side drawer panels **96**, **98**. As illustrated in FIG. **19**, the drawer glide mechanisms **10** can permit the drawer **80** to be moved in and out of the drawer cabinet **78**. When the drawer **80** is moved into the drawer cabinet **78**, the front drawer panel **100** can rest against portions of the face frame components **88**, **90**.

While the embodiment of the drawer system **110** illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20** is shown having drawer glide mechanisms **10** that are used in a face frame drawer cabinet **78**, the drawer glide mechanisms **10** can also be used in frameless cabinets. For example, the drawer glide mechanisms **10** can be attached to the back side paneling of a frameless drawer cabinet with the v-notch socket **12**, as well as to one or more side panels or other structures within a frameless cabinet. Thus, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can be used in a variety of settings within different types of kitchen and bathroom cabinets to facilitate drawer installation and movement.

Overall, the drawer glide mechanism **10** advantageously combines the low cost of an epoxy glide with the high performance of a ball bearing glide. This enables ease of manufacturing and assembly, labor and time savings, cost reduction, and results in drawers that operate and move smoothly within kitchen or bathroom cabinetry.

For example, and as described above, epoxy glides are low cost, and include a single roller (e.g. wheel) on both ends of the glide mechanism. The rollers are used to allow the drawer to slide in and out of a piece of cabinetry along the guide members. The epoxy guides do not utilize capturing of components to severely restrict or entirely prohibit relative movement of components. Rather, the guides of an epoxy glide are set loosely within one another such that one guide member can unintentionally move relative the other during the operation, often resulting in uneven and wobbly drawer movement. Epoxy glides include an inner guide member and an outer guide member. The inner guide member can sit at least in part within the outer guide member, such that the roller on each guide member contacts the other opposing guide member. However, in this arrangement it is possible for the inner guide member to fall off of or slip away from an outer guide member in at least one direction, causing the rollers to lose at least partial contact with the guide members, and for the drawer movement to become unstable and non-linear.

The ball bearing guides, on the other hand, are often bulky, expensive, and require two-piece sockets and/or additional fasteners (e.g. bolts) to support them within a storage compartment. These guides are often designed for use in industrial settings, such as for storage of computer components. They are also designed and used for high end cabinetry, where the walls of the cabinet are much thicker than common kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, and where the dimensional tolerances in designing and manufacturing the cabinetry are more precise.

In common kitchens and bathrooms, where the tolerances of the cabinetry are not as precise, and where there are often misshapen, slightly warped, and/or different sized cabinets, it would be advantageous to have drawer glides that utilize the more smooth, linear operation of a ball bearing guide, yet are still light-weight, low cost, and can function within a cabinet that does not have the thick paneling and precise tolerances found in the cabinetry described above. Thus, it would be advantageous to have drawer glides that have tight capture, as described above, such that the elongate guides **14**, **18** do not fall of or slip away from one another as occurs with epoxy glides, and also advantageous to have drawer glides that can be installed in cabinets with relatively low dimensional tolerances and thin paneling.

The drawer glide mechanism **10** described above can accomplish these goals by utilizing, for example, an inexpensive, single plastic socket piece, such as v-notch socket **12**, with relatively thin metal guide members **14**, **18**, and a metal ball bearing component **16**. The drawer glide mechanism **10** described above is both light-weight and low cost, can be used interchangeably with common v-notch sockets typically used in kitchen bathrooms and cabinets, and affords the consistently smooth and well-structured movement that is desired.

Additionally, while the drawer glide mechanism **10** can be made to have a smooth operation and have tight tolerances, the drawer glide **10** can also advantageously include one or more components to facilitate adjustment of the guide members **14**, **18** and/or of an attached drawer. For example, and as described above, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can include one or more floating and fixed members, slots, and/or embossing. These components can aid in the installation and proper adjustment of a drawer within a kitchen or bathroom cabinet. Additionally, or alternatively, the drawer glide mechanism **10** can include a v-notch socket **12** that has opening(s) such as a first opening and second opening **22**, **24** that facilitate relative movement of the first elongate guide member **12** with the drawer cabinet itself (e.g. to the back wall panel **82** of the drawer cabinet **78**). Advantageously, these adjustments can be self-adjusting. Thus, no additional equipment, fasteners, and/or any type of further mechanical adjustment is required by an operator once the drawer has initially been installed.

While the above embodiments are described in the context of a kitchen or bathroom cabinet, the embodiments described above can be used in other environments as well, including but not limited to other areas of a home, in commercial settings such as offices, warehouses, etc. Additionally, while the embodiment of the drawer glide mechanism **10** described above and illustrated in FIGS. **1-18** includes a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, a second elongate guide member **18**, two floating members **54**, two fixed members **56**, a slot **52**, and an embossed portion **74**, other combinations and numbers of components can also be used. For example, in some embodiments a drawer glide mechanism can include a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, a second elongate guide member **18**, three floating members **54**, three fixed members **56**, and an embossed portion **74**. In some embodiments a drawer glide mechanism can include a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, a second elongate guide member **18**, two floating members **54**, and two fixed members **56**. In some embodiments a drawer glide mechanism can include a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, and a second elongate guide member **18**. In some embodiments a drawer glide mechanism can include a v-notch socket **12**, a first elongate guide member **14**, a ball bearing component **16**, a second elongate guide member **18**, two floating members **54**, two fixed members **56**, and a slot **52**. Various other combinations are also possible.

Furthermore, in some embodiments the drawer glide mechanism can comprise for example a common epoxy glide, without a ball bearing component, but can include one or more floating members **54**, fixed members **56**, slots **52**, and/or embossed portions **74**. Thus, the floating and fixed members **54**, **56**, as well as other features described above including but not limited to the slot **52** and embossed portion **74**, can be used not only on a ball bearing glide like drawer glide mechanism **10** described above, but on any type of glide mechanism.

Although these inventions have been disclosed in the context of certain preferred embodiments and examples, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the present inventions extend beyond the specifically disclosed embodiments to other alternative embodiments and/or uses of the inventions and obvious modifications and equivalents thereof. In addition, while several variations of the inventions have been shown and described in detail, other modifications, which are within the scope of these inventions, will be readily apparent to those of skill in the art based upon this disclosure. It is also contemplated that various combinations or sub-combinations of the specific features and aspects of the embodiments can be made and still fall within the scope of the inventions. It should be understood that various features and aspects of the disclosed embodiments can be combined with or substituted for one another in order to form varying modes of the disclosed inventions. Thus, it is intended that the scope of at least some of the present inventions herein disclosed should not be limited by the particular disclosed embodiments described above.

What is claimed is:

1. An assembly, comprising:

two drawer glide mechanisms, each of the drawer glide mechanisms comprising:

a first elongate guide member having a longitudinally extending body and a distal end, the first elongate guide member comprising a web portion, a first flange portion extending from a first edge of the web portion, and a second flange portion extending from a second edge of the web portion, each of the first and second flange portions comprising an elongate concave track facing the elongate concave track of the other flange portion;

a second elongate guide member nested within the first elongate guide member, the second elongate guide member having a longitudinally extending body, a web portion, a first flange portion extending from a first edge of the web portion, and a second flange portion extending from a second edge of the web portion, each of the first and second flange portions comprising an elongate concave track facing away from the elongate concave track of the other flange portion, wherein the elongate concave tracks of the first and second elongate guide members are sized and shaped to receive the plurality of ball bearings;

a ball bearing component comprising an elongate ball bearing race having a first end and a second end and a plurality of ball bearings, said ball bearing race spacing said plurality of ball bearings between said first end and said second end, said ball bearing component positioned between the first and second elongate guide members and configured to permit longitudinal movement of the second elongate guide member relative to the first elongate guide member, wherein the plurality of ball bearings are positioned between the elongate concave tracks of the first elongate guide member and the elongate concave tracks of the second guide member, and wherein cooperation between the elongate concave tracks of the first elongate guide member, the elongate concave tracks of the second guide member and the plurality of ball bearings severely restricts movement of the second elongate guide member with respect to the first elongate guide member in any direction other than the permitted longitudinal movement; and

a socket having a body portion, the socket receiving the distal end of the first elongate guide member, the socket permitting side-to-side movement of the distal end of the first elongate guide member relative to the socket.

2. The assembly of claim **1**, wherein the socket comprises a ramp portion sized and shaped to guide the distal end of the first elongate guide member into the socket when the distal end of the first elongate guide member is received into the socket.

3. The assembly of claim **1**, wherein the body portion of the socket includes at least one flange extending in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinally extending body of the first elongate guide member.

4. The assembly of claim **1**, wherein the first elongate guide member comprises a stop member at a distal end of the first elongate guide member, the stop member configured to limit relative motion between the first elongate guide member and the second elongate guide member.

5. The assembly of claim **1**, wherein the second elongate guide member comprises a web portion and at least one slot extending through a thickness of the web portion.

6. The assembly of claim **1**, comprising:

at least one fixed member protruding from and extending generally transverse to the longitudinally extending body of the second elongate guide member; and

at least one floating member extending at least partially over the fixed member, the floating member configured to slide over the first fixed member in a transverse direction relative the longitudinally extending body of the second elongate guide member.

* * * * *